



# A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

## Asthma Awareness

World Asthma Day – May 5, 2015

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*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

More than 22 million Americans have asthma, which is caused by a contraction of the airways in the lungs.

Dr. Suzanne Beavers is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Environmental Health. Suzanne's joining us today to discuss ways to control and prevent asthma attacks. Welcome to the show, Suzanne.

[Dr. Beavers] Thank you. I'm happy to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Suzanne, let's start with, does asthma usually begin early in life?

[Dr. Beavers] Well, it usually does. Asthma can begin in childhood, but adults may also develop asthma.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the symptoms of asthma?

[Dr. Beavers] There are several symptoms we ask people to look for. Coughing, especially at night; a chronic cough, wheezing; shortness of breath, particularly after exercise; and a cold that just doesn't seem to go away are some of the symptoms we think about.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the things that can trigger an asthma attack?

[Dr. Beavers] A common trigger is respiratory infections. Cigarette can be a common trigger, as well, either due to the individual themselves smoking or being exposed to secondhand smoke. Furry pets may be a trigger, such as your household cat or dog. Pests, such as mice or cockroaches can be a trigger. And then mold is a common trigger, as well.

[Dr. Gaynes] Suzanne, what are some strategies for managing asthma?

[Dr. Beavers] With proper medical and environmental management, people with asthma can lead normal, healthy lives, free of emergency department visits and hospitalizations, as well as being able to attend school and work regularly. They must take medications to control their asthma, as well as medications for an asthma attack, should that occur.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about asthma?

[Dr. Beavers] They can go to [cdc.gov/asthma](http://cdc.gov/asthma).

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Suzanne. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Suzanne Beavers about ways to control and prevent asthma attacks.

Although there is no cure, asthma can be controlled with medication and by avoiding the things that might trigger an attack. If you or someone you know has asthma, talk with your health care provider about ways to control it.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.